



NEWS RELEASE

December 9, 2002

Alamogordo agents find marijuana and cash stash *877 Pounds of Marijuana, \$22,500 in Suspected Drug Cash Revealed*

EL PASO, Texas -- Agents from the Alamogordo, New Mexico Station denied drug smugglers their Christmas offerings over the weekend in the form of 877 pounds in marijuana, and \$22,500 in suspected drug cash in two separate incidents.

On Saturday, Dec. 7, 2002, agents at the Alamogordo, New Mexico, Highway 70 Traffic Checkpoint, found the drug cash in a false gas tank after a Border Patrol canine alerted on a 1992 Chevy Suburban. Neither of the two occupants of the truck claimed to have knowledge of the currency found in the tank wrapped in two cellophane bundles. The men, both residents of Mexico, said they were traveling from Washington State to Albuquerque, and got lost.

One subject had two prior immigration arrests in October 2001. The second subject had a valid resident alien card and claimed to have borrowed the truck from a friend. The case was turned over to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Las Cruces for disposition.

On Sunday, Dec. 8, 2002, Alamogordo agents at the Highway 54 Traffic Checkpoint discovered 877.5 pounds of marijuana in a 1996 tractor/trailer rig driven by two U.S. citizens from El Paso.

The truck was headed for Pennsylvania when the vehicle was encountered at the Checkpoint. Agents detected unusual mannerisms by the driver of the rig, who provided inconsistent information about his cargo and destination. A canine inspection quickly revealed seven cardboard boxes containing 33 bundles of marijuana. The value of the marijuana load is estimated at \$702,000.

The matter was turned over to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Las Cruces for further investigation. Both subjects were revealed to have extensive criminal histories.

To date, agents in Alamogordo have made 51 drug seizures, valued at \$8.7 million since Oct. 1, 2002, the start of the new fiscal year.

~ USBP ~

VHS video available to interested members of the media